

Trail Talk

Conasauga Ranger District

June - July 2011



"Here is calm so deep, grasses cease waving...

wonderful how completely everything in nature fits into us, as if truly part and parent of us. The sun shines not on us, but in us.

The rivers flow not past, but through us, thrilling, tingling, vibrating every fiber and cell of the substance of our bodies, making them glide and sing." --- John Muir



June 2011 –west side volunteer, **Fred Pilcher**, gave district personnel a helping hand keeping areas of Johns Mtn and Pilcher Pond free of litter...**Del Yoder** of BMTA struck out on his own to work on a section of the Benton MacKaye Trail...a very impressive contingent of BCHNG volunteers showed up for three consecutive days, which included



BCHNG Volunteers at Jacks River Fields

National Trails Day, working in the Jacks River Fields Campground and on the South Fork Trail mowing the grounds, cleaning and pressure washing restrooms, maintaining campsites, weed-eating, cleaning fire pits, hauling out trash, and cutting back brush...those members of BCHNG who came out and supported the cause were **Gabrielle Burke, Heather Burke, Joe Burke, Sharon Burke, Tommy Burke, Nancy**

Chancey, Martha Fillingham, Carlos Martel, Bruce Shedd, Susan Shedd,

Debbie Kraemer, Junior Kyle, Carol Martel, Caleb Patterson, Caleb Patterson, Calen Patterson, Gary Patterson, Carolyn Touryniere, Lakota Towe, and Melinda Towe...our very dependable Beech Bottom/Jacks River Falls volunteer who patrols the area for illegal campers, breaks down illegal fire rings and cleans up garbage left by forest visitors, **Mark Voykovic** does so with a smile on his face as he advances the cause of Leave No Trace ethics to our wilderness visitors...**Rick Moon** took it upon himself to cut blow downs on the Pinhoti Trail from Rock Creek and up the mountain for two miles...The Conasauga District's National Trails Day event was a huge success with many volunteers showing up to trim and brush back the Sumac Creek Trail...those good citizens who braved a long day through the heat and humidity were **Tannis Blackwell, Susan Boyle, Troy Brown, Wanda Brown, Amos Burrell, Julia Chromiak, Delaney Cullen, Jim Cullen, Gennie Dasinger, Anthony Emmanuel, John Franetic, Bill Hester, Jim Holland, June Jordan, Jim Leatherwood, Jim McGarvey, Cindy Mitchell, Patti Nethery, Tom Owens, Terry Palmeri, Jerry Phurrough, Jean Puett, Thomas Puett, Bill Semsrott, and Mike Tedder**...members of the BMTA, **Darcy Douglas, Bruce Felden, Bill Hamrick, and Ken Jones**, took part in a trail maintenance excursion to work on a section of the Benton MacKaye Trail ...more cleanup maintenance at the Jacks River Fields CG was done by BCHNG member **Carlos Martel** making sure the place looked up-to-par for campers...**Larry Dumas** of BMTA spread his trail maintenance duties over the course of two days working on a section of the Benton

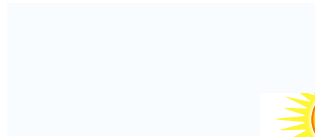
MacKaye...**Wanda Brown** keeps doing a heck of a job on the upkeep of the volunteer database with the hours and projects that are turned in to her...**Jim Holland and Linda Pringle** took to their horses on the Hemp Top Trail spending several hours cutting out the blow downs across the trail...**Helen Chamberlain**, along with her horse, was kind enough to go down to the Beech Bottom Trail to haul out a large trash bag full of garbage sitting alongside Beech Creek...some of our superlative trail volunteers, **Jim Bishop, Troy Brown, Wanda Brown, Jim Leatherwood, and Wayne Pattillo** spent a long day out on the Hickory Creek Trail from the Rice Camp Trailhead to Thomas Creek removing the many blow downs that have come down during recent storms...BMTA members **Tom Keene and Curt Voogt** did their part in maintaining a section of the Benton MacKaye Trail accomplishing some much needed trail work...**Tim Woody**, camp host for Lake Conasauga Campground, continues to do a great job watching over the place, answering campers questions and cleaning campsites and restrooms...at the Pocket Campground, **Glenn Kirkland** is providing much needed support for FS personnel as our camp host...your admirable achievements this month totaled **682.5 hours!!!** We here at the Conasauga Ranger District can't thank you volunteers enough for your loyal support!!!

July 2011 – though volunteer efforts got off to slow start for the month, things ended on a strong note...BMTA member **George Owen** performed trail maintenance on a section of the Benton MacKaye Trail over the course of two days...members of Ellijay Mountain Biking Association (EMBA) **Mike Palmeri, Terry Palmeri, Daryl Myers, Andrew Gates, and Katie Kepley** came out to lend their support to our trails by removing blow downs and cutting back blackberry bushes on the Pinhoti 2 portion of the trail...**Fred Pilcher**, who oversees the west side of the district, worked a couple of days this month mowing grass at the Pilcher Pond area and picking up trash at the Johns Mtn. Overlook ... a good turnout at the monthly volunteer workday saw **Jim Bishop,**



Tannis Blackwell, Tom Blackwell, Chuck Brock, Troy Brown, Wanda Brown, Amos Burrell, Ron Christie, Kathleen Corcoron, David Fergaman, Earle Kirkbridge, Jeff Krivo, Jim Leatherwood, Tom Owens, Taylor Slate, and David Tanner swing blade the top section of the Emery Creek Trail...one of our volunteers who has been away for a while, **Steve Clayton,**

came back to help out by bush hogging a couple of FS roads for us around the Pinhoti Trail...our “non-official” database maintainer for CDTV, **Wanda Brown** did her part to keep track of all volunteer names, hours and projects that go into the database...representatives of TEAM Conasauga, **Troy and Wanda Brown, Rick Moon and Larry Wheat** assisted district personnel during a General Management Review (GMR) at the Dry Creek recreation area...BCHNG members **Junior Kyle, Carlos Martel, Carol Martel, Chuck Panter, Reece Panter and Lakota Towe** spent a day at Jacks River Fields CG and South Fork Trail performing various campground and trail maintenance duties...a number of volunteers from BCHNWG and SORBA came out for the Dry Creek workday to give their time and energy to further improve the new trail system...those that came out for a good cause were **Cindy Bell, Steve Clayton, Mike Cole, Anthony Emanuel, Conrad Fernandez, Kimi Gregg, Bill Hester, Jim McGarvey, Cindy Mitchell, Rick Moon, Patti Nethery, Adam Scott, Larry Wheat, and David Wheaton**...since we need more volunteers certified to use the Ditch Witch trail machine, **Carlos Martel** attended a one day training session to learn all the basics...**Tim Woody and Glenn Kirkland**, camp hosts for Lake Conasauga CG and The Pocket CG, respectively, did a fantastic job at these popular camping areas... wrapping up the month, **Jim Holland and Joan Tipton** went to Dally Gap on the Jacks River Trail to cut out trees across the trail down to the first river crossing... during a very hot and humid month, volunteers still racked up an amazing **698.5 hours!!!** Just an absolutely incredible job that you do for our trails and recreation areas!!! You’re the best!!!



Asleep at the wheel Zzzz...

On two consecutive days recently, this writer fell asleep at the wheel (or nearly so) while returning from a day in the woods. I knew better, but I thought, “I’ve only got a few more miles to drive. I can stay focused that long.” But I couldn’t fight the drowsiness and I struggled the rest of the way home. I could have caused an accident! Were it not for a friend and co-worker who brought it to my attention later, I may have just forgotten about it...till the next time. Does this sound familiar? I hope not. But it can happen to you! Driving home in an air conditioned vehicle after a hot, tiring day doing trail

maintenance, it can happen to anyone. It did happen to a Forest Service employee on the Klamath N.F. in California who went off a Forest Road, grazing a tree before he was able to navigate back to the pavement. Here are some lessons learned:

- ✓ Get enough sleep at night. If you have to get up earlier than usual (as in travelling to a volunteer workday), get to bed earlier the night before.
- ✓ If you are tired or working late and have to drive, do a self assessment; am I awake and alert enough to drive home?
- ✓ Beware of “caffeine confidence”! Coffee is no substitute for a good night’s sleep or taking a break when needed.
- ✓ Don’t be too proud to admit you are too sleepy to drive. If there is another qualified driver in the vehicle, give them the wheel for awhile and take turns driving.
- ✓ Take frequent breaks. When feeling tired, pull over in a safe place and take a short walk.
- ✓ If you cannot safely drive even after you’ve done all the above, find a safe location, pull over and take a nap.
- ✓ DON’T BECOME A STATISTIC; BE SMART AND ARRIVE ALIVE!!!



Please Be Careful!

2011 - 2012 Hunting Seasons

The Cohutta Wildlife Management Area (WMA) includes nearly all National Forest lands on the east side of the Conasauga Ranger District north of Forest Road 18, Holly Creek Road, and west of Forest Road 64 and 22. On the west side of the district, the Johns Mountain WMA generally includes all state and federal forest lands on Johns Mountain and points east to I-75. National Forest lands outside a WMA are included within the statewide general hunting season.

There are no restrictions on camping and trail use during hunting season. However, it is a courteous gesture to our hunters to stay out of the woods before 10:00 a.m., particularly during the WMA firearms season. It is highly recommended that you wear blaze orange if you're out during the firearms season. For more information, go to: www.gohuntgeorgia.com.

Here are the current hunting season dates...

Cohutta Wildlife Management Area

Archery Season: September 10 – October 11, October 17 – 21; deer and bear
Firearms Season: October 13 – 16, November 30 – December 4; buck only and bear
Small Game Season: August 15 – September 9, October 22 – November 28,
December 5 – February 29
Special Hog Hunt: March 3 – 9
Turkey Season: March 24 – May 15



Johns Mountain Wildlife Management Area

Archery Season: September 10 – October 21; deer and bear
Adult/Child Hunt: October 28 – 30; deer and bear
Firearms Season: November 22 – 26; buck only and bear, either sex deer last 2 days
Small Game Season: August 15 – September 9, October 22 – 26, October 31 -
November 20, November 27 - February 29
Turkey Season: March 24 – 30, March 31 – April 6 (Quota 75), April 7 – May 15

Statewide General Hunting Season in North Georgia

Deer & Bear Archery Season: September 10 – October 14
Deer & Bear Primitive Weapons Season: October 15 – 21
Deer Firearms Season: October 22 – January 1
Bear Firearms Season: October 22 – December 4
Turkey Season: March 24 – May 15

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR THESE CREATURES

Have you ever done the “snake dance” or jumped 3 vertical feet from a standing position? If not, then you have probably not had a really close encounter with one of these venomous critters. Troy Brown did recently on the East Cowpen Trail when he looked down to see this big Timber Rattlesnake lying at his feet.

Remember...always watch where you step, reach or take a break when you’re in the woods.



CONASAUGA BITS AND PIECES

First Aid/CPR Class. The Conasauga RD is planning a volunteer First Aid/CPR class on a Friday in September to be announced. If you are an active volunteer and need or would like to take this class, please notify Diana Mullen at dlmullen@fs.fed.us. First priority will be certified crosscut and chainsaw operators. Remember, all certified sawyers must have first aid training every 3 years and CPR training annually to remain certified. Let Diana know if you only need the CPR training to stay certified.

Chainsaw Certification Class. The Blue Ridge RD in Blairsville is offering a chainsaw certification class on September 9 and 10 for recertifications and new certifications. If you are an experienced chainsaw operator and an active trail volunteer and would like to take the class, contact David Kuykendall at dkuykendall@fs.fed.us.

SEFTC – LNT Class. The Southeastern Foot Trails Coalition will be conducting a Leave No Trace Trainer Course on November 11 and 12 at Vogel State Park outside Blairsville. The class is for those seeking to learn the seven principles of outdoor ethics for personal enrichment or to teach others. The cost is \$75 which includes food and educational materials. To register, go to www.southeastfoottrails.org.

Trans North Georgia Mountain Bike Adventure. The Trans Georgia Mountain Bike event will use the Pinhoti Trail, west of I-75, sometime the first week in September. The 9-day race starts on the South Carolina border on September 3rd and extends 350 miles across north GA to Alabama, west of Rome.

Georgia Jewel 100-mile Endurance Foot Race. The endurance event is an out-and-back race using the Pinhoti Trail from Dalton almost to Highway 27. It is scheduled for the weekend of September 24 and 25.





MARK YOUR CALENDARS...

- **August 19 - 20**
Working Weekend #61. Tearbitches Trail – slingblading. Car camp at Ballfield Group Camping Area.
- **September 17**
Sumac Creek Trail – trimming/slingblading. We return to Sumac Creek to complete the maintenance we began on National Trails Day. Equestrians needed.
- **October 15**
Annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic and Awards Ceremony.
- **November 18 - 19**
Working Weekend #62. Horseshoe Bend/lower East Cowpen – water bar/dip maintenance. Equestrians needed. Car Camp at Cottonwood Patch Campground.
- **December. No workdays planned in this month**
- **January 21.**
Hickory Ridge Trail - water bar/dip maintenance

If you are interested, please contact Ed at 706-695-6736 x 118 or e-mail elang@fs.fed.us

Note: In addition to these scheduled workdays, we are trying to find some volunteers who are interested in working independently or with a small group to tackle smaller projects such as these: Complete trimming of lower Panther Creek Trail, remove (3) blowdowns from Horseshoe Bend Trail.



Bill Hester with his bike trailer that holds equipment.



BCHNWG & SORBA Volunteers at Dry Creek Workday



Emery Creek crew making production!



Packing tools for a hard day's work in the heat.



**Fred Pilcher keeps Pilcher's Pond & Johns Mtn
Overlook Spiffed up!**



**Some of the Dry Creek Grand Opening
Attendees**